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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REFERENCE: SAIGON 83

1. FIRST POSTING OF BIG MINH'S CANDIDACY AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE WHICH PRECEDED IT GIVEN EXTENSIVE FRONT-PAGE COVERAGE IN VERNACULAR PRESS. THERE IS ALSO STRAIGHT AND RATHER FULL ACCOUNT OF NA JULY 1 DEBATE ON MINH'S CASE IN JULY 3 MORNING ISSUE OF VIET NAM PRESS (VIETNAMESE EDITION).

R.R.

R.SG.

2. THERE HAS AS YET BEEN LITTLE EDITORIAL COMMENT ON MINH'S CANDIDACY. ONE EDITORIAL APPEARING IN JULY 3 ENGLISH LANGUAGE SAIGON POST DESCRIBES MINH AS PERSON WHOSE "ABYSMAL IGNORANCE OF VIETNAMESE REALITIES" WAS PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR POLITICAL DISORDERS OF 1964/65. EDITORIAL ADDS THAT MINH "MIGHT BE UNBEATABLE IF THE SEPTEMBER CONTEST....SHOULD BE ONE IN WHICH SHEER LUCK AND POPULARITY PLAY THE MAJOR ROLES IN GETTING A CANDIDATE ELECTED." BUT, IT CONCLUDES, "THE SEPTEMBER ELECTION, ONE HAS GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE, WILL NOT BE SUCH AN OCCASION. THE PRESENCE OF SUCH PERSONALITIES AS TRAN VAN HUONG AND OTHER SIMILARLY ENERGETIC CONTENDERS....SEEMS TO POINT TO A FORM OF CAMPAIGN WHICH WOULD FAVOR GOOD DEBATERS WITH A PLATFORM AND THOSE HAVING SOME ACHIEVEMENTS TO POINT TO. THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN CHIEF OF STATE NGUYEN VAN THIEN AND PREMIER NGUYEN CAO KY AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR ALSO SEEMS TO INDICATE THAT THE MILITARY TICKET IS AWARE OF THIS NEW

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POL 14 VIETS

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Saigon 188

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY *John J. Gubey* DATE *10/5/81*RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE

TS AUTH. REASON(S)

ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐DECLASSIFIED ☐ RECLASSIFIED ☒RELEASE DENIED ☐

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-2- SAIGON 188, JULY 3

REALITY ON THE VIETNAMESE POLITICAL CHESSBOARD."

3. MEANWHILE, RD MINISTER GENERAL THANG'S REMARKS TO PRESS ON JULY 1 REGARDING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACIES BEING GIVEN WIDE COVERAGE. THANG SAID THAT FORMATION OF THIEN/KY SLATE ERASED THE IMPRESSION OF CONFUSION AND DISSENSION WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES. ASKED ABOUT GENERAL MINH, THANG REPLIED THAT HE PERSONALLY DOES NOT OPPOSE MINH'S CANDIDACY BUT "SINCE WE HAVE OTHER PERSONALITIES LIVING ABROAD WHOSE CASE IS SIMILAR TO THAT OF GENERAL MINH, GENERAL MINH'S RETURN MIGHT CAUSE DISSENSION WHEN WE BADLY NEED UNITY." THANG CONCLUDED, "THE GENERALS THEN CLAIMED THAT THEY WENT ABROAD FOR THE SAKE OF NATION, NOW THEY SHOULD STAY WHERE THEY ARE FOR THE SAKE OF THE NATION TOO."

BUNKER

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